

Mono County Local Transportation Commission

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Minutes

Monday, February 11, 2008, 9:00 a.m.
Town / County Conference Room
Mammoth Lakes, CA

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners Present

Bill Reid, Vice Chair
Hap Hazard, Supervisor
Neil McCarroll, Town Council
Tom Farnetti, Supervisor
Rob Clark, Alternate TOML
Karen Johnston, Alternate TOML

Staff Present

Scott Burns, Director
Ray Jarvis, Co-Director
Gerry LeFrancois, Planner, Mono County
Peter Bernasconi, TOML
Gwen Plummer, Planner, Mono County
Jennifer Hansen, Secretary

Caltrans

Tom Hallenbeck
Brad Mettam
Forest Becket
Craig Holste

ESTA

Jill Batchelder

Other

Dave Wilbrecht, CAO
Steve Anderson, Mono County Public Works
Ralph Obenberger, Mono County Sheriff's Dept
Pete DeGeorge, Mono County Sheriff's Dept
Joe Sobota, CHP - Mammoth
Michael O'Sullivan, CHP - Bridgeport
Brian Biehl, CHP - Bishop
Stacey Powells, Mammoth Times
Kathy Cage, Mammoth Lakes resident
Emile Rummel, Mono County resident
Jeff Hansen, Mono County resident
Eric Olsen, Mono County resident

Agenda items may not have been taken in order.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Reid at 9:05. The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner Hazard.

1) PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments included discussion regarding the recent storms and road closure events. Jeff Hansen addressed the commission thanking all the public agencies for putting safety first during the series of storms and road closures. The media article that was written does not give a positive image to the work and effort that was put forth to maintain public safety.

Eric Olsen, a resident of Crowley, addressed the commission regarding the snow fences to help keep the drifts down. He heard that trees might be planted to also keep drifts down but won't they blow down if the wind is strong enough? His suggestion to help keep drifts down is to build more snow fences.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 14th, 2008

- a) Commissioner Farnetti motioned to approve the January 14th minutes. Seconded by Commissioner McCarroll. Abstained by Vice Chair Reid, Alternate Commissioner Clark, and Alternate Commissioner Johnston. Passed 3-0. Those in favor: Hazard, McCarroll, and Farnetti.

3) COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

a) Road Closure Workshop

Action: Conducted a workshop with Caltrans, CHP, Town and County staff regarding snow and road closure process.

Scott Burns reported this item is a carry over item from the January 11th meeting regarding additional issues, responses, etc. Commissioner Hazard reported that he initially brought this up at the January 11th meeting due to radio communications that could be used for Crowley residents. He believes that improving the communication system between agencies and residents of the county needs to be a priority. He would like to see changeable turn-around signs at the feeder roads in the Crowley Lake area.

Vice Chairman Reid mentioned that the February 20th meeting amongst all agencies will be the place to have a detailed discussion with a recommendation to be brought back to the LTC. There will be a debriefing and workshop session at a future LTC meeting. He feels that private enterprise should be at the debriefing session along with GIS and avalanche experts. He also mentioned that given the public and agency representation, a brief discussion will take place at this meeting. Vice Chairman Reid went on to discuss that every department and agency did an excellent job but communication can improve. He then turned the discussion over to the Commissioners.

All the Commissioners agreed that communication needs to be improved between agencies to keep public safety the number one consideration for those motorists that have the potential of becoming stranded, etc. The staff experience that the county has with weather related issues is great to be making these difficult decisions but things need to change to implement a long range communication goal and improving the system. The debriefing will be useful as the public insight is important to help address the issues. During the debriefing, it would be nice to have a "pecking" order on how things are taken care of through the various agencies when situations like road closures arise. Vice Chairman Reid turned the discussion over to other county staff and members of the audience.

Jeff Hansen reported to the commission that he feels that communication is key during events such as this. He also mentioned that the Caltrans sign on 395 should have been placed after the off ramp at Crowley rather than before to inform those residents if the road is closed. Caltrans mentioned that the sign was placed in its location due to environment issues. Commissioner Hazard stated that closing the highway in Bishop does help people coming north not get stuck along the highway but weaknesses with closing the highway so far south should be identified. E.J. Rummel also mentioned to keep the closure notifications in Bishop. He would rather see the roads closed than driving through bad weather. CHP has done an excellent job at the drop of a hat. Jeff Hansen also mentioned the new air resource board regulations on equipment and how much snow removal gear would now be considered obsolete. Is this happening to all fleets of equipment throughout the town and county?

Under Sheriff Ralph Obenberger and Sergeant Pete DeGeorge mirrored that communication is key and public safety is not exempt when it comes to the communication lines.

CHP reported that it is hard for their dispatchers to constantly be updating the media, other agencies, etc during these road closures. CHP has a website (<http://cad.chp.ca.gov>) to gives up-to-date information and is a great tool for the public to use. They believe that debriefings are necessary after events like road closures to help develop a system to utilize when similar events take place in the future.

Kathy Cage mentioned that something seems different this year about when and why the road closes. She wanted to know what is the process and who makes the decision to close the road

(CHP makes a recommendation to Caltrans to shut down the road); concerned about the new, young CHP officers that aren't familiar with our winter weather that they might not be the best candidates to close the highway (CHP stated that any road closures are made by supervisors and upper management on the recommendation of the officers); what determines the duration of closures; and does the budget cuts affect the service level to clear the roads? She also commented on the Reverse 911 call that was done during a series of previous storms and how the communication through that avenue can be improved (it was mentioned that this was not the first time the Reverse 911 system was used and improvements will be made as the need arises).

Stacey Powells mentioned to keep the radio stations on any communication list so people have other avenues to receive information.

CAO, Dave Wilbrecht, questioned who will be the coordinator for the debriefing session? Vice Chairman Reid recommended he get together with Sheriff Scholl to coordinate a debriefing that can be brought back to the LTC. Vice Chairman Reid thanked everyone for coming and giving their input.

4) CALTRANS

a) **MOU Projects Workshop**

Action: Received information regarding the history and overview of the current status of MOU projects. Proposed for funding via a Memorandum of Understanding with Inyo and Kern counties and Caltrans.

MOU projects are a commitment of projects based on needs. Brad Mettam provided the commission with a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a handout reviewing the MOU project process. There were no comments or questions from the Commissioners on the topic. This was an informational presentation.

b) **California Transportation Plan Overview**

Action: Received an overview of the California Transportation Plan and sections recently updated. Brad Mettam provided the commission with a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a handout and a copy of the California Transportation Plan. There were no comments or questions from the Commissioners on the topic. This was an informational presentation.

c) **Benton/Chalfant Visioning Update**

Action: Received information on the Benton/Chalfant Visioning Process including establishing a long range community vision, principles of guiding growth, and possible growth scenarios.

Forest Becket provided handouts to the commission on the Chalfant Visioning along with a handout with the information on the start of the Benton Visioning Process. These processes are integrating land use and transportation. Mr. Becket explained the Chalfant process and what actions took place between the community, Caltrans, the county and developers. The kickoff meeting for the Benton Visioning is February 28th. There is more potential in Benton for looking at their status in the future. There will be more in-depth discussions with scenarios than were put together for the Chalfant process. Commissioner Hazard mirrored that Benton is welcoming the planning process and there is a lot of potential for growth and moving forward with the future of the community. It is great that Caltrans is bringing the funds to the table to help make these processes a reality.

All Commissioners thought this was an interesting discussion and a great process for the future of these communities.

d) **Update on activities in Mono County**

Action: Received an update on information from National, State, and Local resources that are related to activities in Mono County.

Caltrans reported they are not being affected by the state budget cuts and the bond measures are making progress. The \$44M Manzanar project was granted by the CTC and is currently going out for bid. Construction on this project should start in the Fall of 2008. The Mono Basin Gaz Ex

will be completely finished once the weather clears. There have been no problems in this area yet this year.

Vice Chairman Reid mentioned that the Antelope Valley RPAC had a changed opinion on the Highpoint Project. The RPAC believes that Bridgeport and the Antelope Valley are fragile economic areas. The project was voted on and passed 15-1 that it should be placed on hold. The RPAC would rather see Sonora Pass open sooner than see the construction on Highpoint. Brad Mettam said they are reopening the planning phase of this project by the direction of the commission from the January 11th meeting.

Other Commissioner input: Commissioner McCarroll mentioned the great job Great Basin Air Pollution is doing controlling the dust at Owens Dry Lake. He also mentioned that the town trolleys are not up to compliance with the new state environmental standards and would like to see a workshop done on these new standards. Commissioner Hazard mentioned to mitigate funding for highway 395 and 6 in future funding. Vice Chairman Reid brought up the big rigs going through Walker and Coleville using their Jake brakes. Brad Mettam will contact Evan Nikirk on the policies for using these brakes.

5) REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & PLAN

a) Public Hearing: 10:00 a.m.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Administrative update

Action: Adopted Resolution 2008-01 approving the administrative update to the 2008 RTP and adopted an EIR addendum for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance.

10:00 a.m. public hearing was moved to 11:23 a.m. due to no public comment. Gerry Le Francois went over the staff report given to the commission. He mentioned that all updates to the RTP are technical (the revenue tables) with no policy changes. All proposed updates were attached to the staff report: EIR addendum; new cover page; updated commissioners and staff; Chapter 2 Table 1 – additional demographics; Chapter 6 – text portion changes only and tables moved to create Appendix E. Commissioner Alternate Clark wanted to know if there was more time available to review the information and if any discrepancies could be corrected? Mr. Le Francois mentioned that it could be brought back to staff to possibly amend. Scott Burns mentioned that further adjustments could be made when the Town's Circulation Element is implemented into the RTP. Commissioner Farnetti moved to adopt Resolution 2008-01 approving the administrative update to the 2008 RTP and was seconded by Commissioner Hazard. Passed 6-0. Those in favor: Hazard, Johnston, Reid, Farnetti, McCarroll, and Clark. Commissioner Farnetti also moved to approve the minor technical adjustments to the RTP and was seconded by Commissioner Hazard. Passed 6-0. Those in favor: Hazard, Johnston, Reid, Farnetti, McCarroll, and Clark.

b) 2008 STIP/RTIP

Action: Adopted Resolution 2008-02 approving the 2008 RTIP. Adoption of an RTIP is exempt from CEQA.

Gerry Le Francois went over the staff report and spreadsheet given to the commission. He explained that he needs commission representation at the March 18th STIP CTC meeting to help explain our RTIP and why we are programming our funds the way we are. The commission representative will be chosen at the March 10th meeting. The CTC can reject our RTIP and staff would like to have the ability to make quick changes if a resubmittal needs to be done. If the RTIP is rejected, a county project will be dropped over a Caltrans project. Commissioner Hazard moved to adopt Resolution 2008-02 approving the 2008 RTIP and was seconded by Commissioner Farnetti. Passed 6-0. Those in favor: Hazard, Johnston, Reid, Farnetti, McCarroll, and Clark. Commissioner Hazard also moved to authorize the submittal of the 2008 RTIP with the possibility of changes being made and was seconded by Commissioner Farnetti. Passed 6-0. Those in favor: Hazard, Johnston, Reid, Farnetti, McCarroll, and Clark.

6) TRANSIT

a) Mountain Express update

Action: Informational item.

Jill Batchelder went over the staff report given to the commission. ESTA has adjusted the time schedule as of February 4th. There is not much data to see if this time adjustment has improved ridership but does show that the weekday ridership is similar to the past ridership data but it does seem that the weekend ridership is up. Further updates will be given as ridership data is available.

b) Update on transit activities in Mono County

Action: Received an update on information related to transit activities in Mono County including an update on the progress of the Short Term Transit Plan and the Coordinated Transit Plan.

Jill Batchelder reported that the Short Range Transit Plan was awarded to: Transit Resource Center. There were three competitive bids for this plan.

7) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a) Unmet Needs Hearing – scheduled for April 14th in Mammoth Lakes

b) LTF Allocations Revised Estimate

Scott Burns reported that the revised estimate shows the reduction of \$70,000 from the original estimate provided by the County Auditor. The Auditor has also issued an estimate for next fiscal year that is \$110,000 less than this year's estimate. Staff will meet for considerations on what to do with this reduction.

c) Maximizing Race Neutral Measures in the Implementation of the Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program – letter presented in the agenda packet prior to meeting.

8) SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – March 10th, 2008

9) ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m. by Vice Chairman Reid.